

Spot Checking

Food ★ Fun ★ Frolic
By Bill Whitman

Boom! Woosh! Splt-t-t! Zap!

No, this has nothing to do with Batman. It simply means this is the time to show your independence both at home and abroad. And by abroad, to say, not on the freeway, 'cause you've got another long week-end staring you in the face—Fourth of July!

Also be a good chance to get "out among 'em", as Whittinghill says for some good food, fun and entertainment. But watch that fire-water!

And speaking of fire-water, brings to mind automatically, Smith Bros. Indian Village Restaurant on Pacific Coast Highway in Torrance. Before we forget, manager Virginia Haack is so-o-o-o right! (Cheezy-wheezy these people that are always right!) But we carried a thing last week on their exciting Thunderbird Early Dinners and goofed on the price. Tsk! tsk! tsk! They are great offerings, these Thunderbird jobs, though and they run only two-ninety per each with the paposes plate going for a dollar-sixty. A bargain! Four till six-thirty, daily.

Not only are they different and exciting in the menu department down there, they have also got another goodie going. Once a week they pop for a Martini with the Lo-Cal Lunch deal and all for one-fifty. How you like-um that! Drop by this different spot one day soon and have some good food and fun.

Remember the thing we carried a while back about the Mexican Food-aholic who was so sold on foods of South-of-the-Border that he ordered a bunch of burritos sent all the way back east?

Well this same cat was so impressed with this Red Onion cuisine that he decided to spend his vacation in California—Rolling Hills to be exact—so as to be near the Red Onion and that Sonora stylecooking.

Yep! Ken Procopio made the trek west last week (despite Indian uprisings all along the trail!) along with Lon and Len Meinecke's "little" boy (about 6ft. 2) Mike. And Red Onion owner Bart Earle couldn't be hap-

pier, the way these two stow the groceries away with the hot stuff.

Now wait a minute! That's not exactly true. Sonora style Mexican food is NOT of the extra hot variety. Fact, it's quite mild—but they'll bring you all the necessary ingredients to MAKE it as hot as you like.

So Mike and Ken are getting their fill (if such is possible) of this Peninsula Center Mexican cuisine, plus the exciting music of the Tepeyac Duo, who play Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nites in the Red Onion Cantina. Catch all this action soon on Silver Spur Road.

It's doubtful that Bart Earle would come out too good at his spot with these guys, though if he ran the same kind of operation that Floyd Freeman has over there at his Western Buffet, 22832 Western Ave., in Torrance.

Floyd pops for one of those "all you can eat" deals with a Chuck Wagon Buffet Dinners bit at a buck fifty-nine, plus tax, and if you want to, you can go back as many times as you feel big enough to do. (Wha-a-a!)

Your beverage and dessert will run you a little extra but at these prices, who's going to kick! They've got two openings daily down there—Eleven in the morning 'til two p.m. and then again at five and close again at nine in the evening. Sundays it's from 12 noon 'til eight. They also have portions for the kiddies.

You think maybe that you must be able to read music in order to be a good musician? Well we've got one for you! Roger Miller's the guy! Now in case you can't recall right off hand, who Roger Miller is, think of the tremendously popular "King of

the Road" and you've got it. He's a jeep-ridin', rifle-carryin' Korean War Vet (during that war, that is) ex-hobo from Erick, Oklahoma, a wide spot in the road that's so small "the city limits signs are back to back", says Roger, and he opened at the Melodyland Theatre the 28th—that's like yesterday—along with jazz pianist Peter Nero, who needs no introduction, either. They'll be at Melodyland for a one week stand so get on the horn and make those reservations. Try 776-7460. Or just try 'information.'

"Smiling Ronnie" at the Tea House Restaurant and Cocktail Lounge has a good one set up for you in case you didn't know.

It's another bus trip. This time to Caliente Race Track on the 17th of next month—that's July—which includes your bus ride, your cab to the track itself, your seat, beer on the bus, plus coffee and doughnuts before departing. Why "coffee and" before leaving? 'Cause the bus leaves at 7:30 IN THE A.M., that's why!

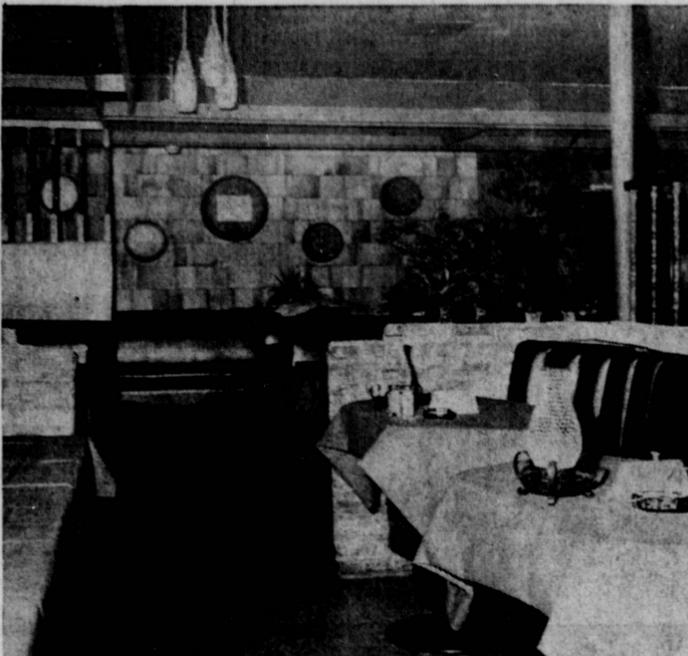
Better make this one. He's got a lot of the regulars signed up already plus some new faces.

SHORT NOTE ABOUT NITE PEOPLE—In case you've been wondering where one of your favorite bartenders has gone—ran into him at the Nob Hill in the Valley the other nite. He's "Eddie", formerly of P. J.'s and all points east and west. Anyway, that's where he is, where he is, where he is! Enjoying food, fun, and frolic with Al Saks and the bunch.

Like to know where NOT to go on Tuesdays? Well it's the Wayfarer Restaurant at 25318 Pacific Coast Highway. Food is always good at this fine Lomita spot but on Tuesdays the service is terrible! Y'see, they close up on Tuesdays.

Any other day, however, the continental service and cuisine is ultra superb for both luncheon and dinner—eleven in the morning 'til eleven at nite. And all times, of course, you have Bud and Trevor at the bar in the cocktail lounge to regale you with their two-liners.

Also, genial hosts, Jimmy and Frank Richmond are continually on hand with their own special brand of greetings and humor. The Wayfar-



DECOROUS DECOR . . . Shown here is the main dining room of the newly decorated House of Prime on Western Ave. in San Pedro. No, they're not lacking in customers . . . this shot was taken after hours to reveal the attractive wood paneling studded with keg bottoms for the rustic touch.

er doesn't open 'til three in the afternoon on Sundays, remember.

And so, with the arrival of the warmer weather it means more and more activity in the dining-out department. For example, Mario Castagnola had another slam-banger last week to open his brand new Castagnola's Restaurant out on the point of Fisherman's Wharf in Redondo Beach, just in time to take advantage of the good summer season along the beach front.

Like his Lobster House, farther up the beach at Redondo Marina, the new "store" carries the nautical motif with the arched beams and the solid fittings you might find aboard one of the old sailing boats back in the dim past. Sparkling new, however, this.

They called it a "Pre-Launching Party" where all and sundry aided in grand style to get it "into the water" so to speak. A goodly

but select crowd were in attendance. The old "Checker" represented the Torrance Press-Herald while Tom Frandsen showed up in his nautical glory to uphold the TV people as well as the Navy, which added just that much more class to the occasion.

Another restaurateur of note from the Fisherman's Wharf area was Tom Washburn, owner-operator of the always popular Fisherman's Haven, just around the bend. And, of course, Jim Scofus and Al Hase were on hand to watch proceedings of the new launching. "Business brings business," observed Jim, with reference to his Golden Hull at the other end of Horseshoe Pier.

All in all, it was a most successful party and mark these words, you'll hear lots from Mario Castagnola, along with his general manager, Charlie Bray and local manager Lou Carabellas, who came along to aid in knocking

the blocks out for the launching.

There are some new and exciting things happening over there in W.L.A. where it used to be "shoot-out-gap," "waltz-with-the-schnitzel" and "love-me-forever" type of stuff on the old 20th Century lot. However, these days it's something else quite different.

That spot has been cleared now, as you probably know, to make room for one of the most beautiful 'spreads' of modern architecture you r

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HACIENDA HANDLEBARS . . . "Pancho" Procopio, world traveler from the east, twangs a mean guitar at Bart Earle's Red Onion in Peninsula Center while awaiting his ration of burritos. (Who that weeth youooo, Pancho, loooking over your shoulder?)

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eyes will see in some time. Space wouldn't allow for us to go into all the ramifications of what a fantastic bunch of buildings they've erected on this old lot and what is now known as The Century Plaza Hotel.

For example, just the other nite we attended the press opening of one of the latest rooms — Yamato — a room with outstanding charm and on the Japanese motif, as the name might imply.

The decor of Yamato reaches back through the ages to Momoyama period of the late 16th century and serving up food that ranges from the ordinary to the exotic. The Ishizaki brothers, Ken, Joe, and Kobo, who created the Yamato Restaurant in San Francisco and one that is the holder of 10 Holiday Magazine awards, have duplicated this new and exotic spot right here in Los Angeles.

Yamato goes full bore, from the Tatami area (you know, where you must remove your shoes and be seated at the low tables) all the way to the decor of the country manner of Japan where you may dine at conventional tables.

One of the more entertaining features of the Japanese Steak Inn area is where you will find built-in grills at each table where your waitress-chef will prepare and cook your favorite steak or chicken in the very special manner of Japan.

We were introduced to an offering the other nite and upon questioning its name were told, "it's probably Japanese Shishikabob." It involves a whole bunch of

things on a long stick (about 6 inches) including chicken, beef, green peppers, onions, and who knows what else . . . but delicious? You better believe it! Understand there's only two other such rooms in the United States—one in New York and the other in Miami. (That's Florida, son!)

A bar is also included in this area where such way-out drinks as "samurai," "geisha" and "sake martinis" are provided. These, of course, are for the more discerning guests. You may also have your regular favorite.

Its a seven-day-a-week operation at Yamato from 11:30 ayem 'til midnight, featuring luncheon, dinner and late supper.

Will try and touch on other rooms and aspects of Century Plaza in coming editions.

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